

REMARKS

Applicants request favorable reconsideration of this application in view of the following remarks. Of claims 1, 2, 4-13, and 15-20 that were pending in the application, claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 8-10, and 12 were rejected in the Office Action and the Advisory Action. Applicants appreciate the allowance of claims 6, 7, 11, 13 and 15-20. Claims 1, 2, 4-13, and 15-20 remain pending for further consideration.

Rejection of Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 8-10, and 12

The Examiner continues to reject claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 8-10, and 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being obvious when considering U.S. Patent No. 6,306,057 (“Morisawa”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,434,928 (“Manaka”). For the following reasons, Applicants continue to respectfully traverse this rejection.

As previously amended, claim 1 (*i.e.*, the claim from which claims 2, 4, 5, 8-10, and 12 depend) recites a drive apparatus for a hybrid vehicle. The drive apparatus includes, among other possible things (italic emphasis added):

- an internal combustion engine;
- a damper connected on one side thereof to a rear of the engine;
- a motor-generator connected on one side thereof to another side of the damper, the motor-generator being capable of starting the engine;
- a magnetic clutch connected on one side thereof to another side of the motor-generator, the magnetic clutch being configured to engage by electromagnetic force;
- a transmission connected to the internal combustion engine via the damper, the motor-generator, and the clutch;
- a starter motor connected to the damper, the starter motor being capable of starting the engine; and
- a dividing wall *of magnetic material* that is disposed between the motor-generator and the magnetic clutch.

As hereafter explained in detail, Morisawa and Manaka (standing alone or combined) fail to teach or suggest such a drive apparatus.

As above-italicized, claim 1 recites a “dividing wall *of magnetic material* that is disposed between the motor-generator and the magnetic clutch.” In response to Applicants’ previous arguments that neither Morisawa (which the Examiner admits fails to teach or suggest an electromagnetic clutch) nor Manaka (which teaches an electromagnetic clutch) teaches or suggest a dividing wall that is made of magnetic material, the Examiner asserts (in the Advisory Action) that Morisawa teaches a dividing wall in Figure 12. Even accepting this assertion, there still is no teaching or suggestion that Morisawa’s diving wall is made “of magnetic material.” Moreover, as Morisawa’s clutch is not an electromagnetic material,

there is no reason why Morisawa's dividing wall would specifically be made of an electromagnetic material.

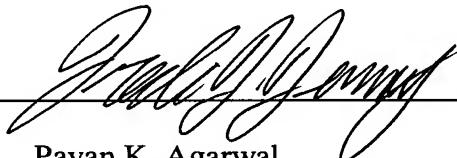
As neither Morisawa nor Manaka teaches a "dividing wall of magnetic material," the references (standing alone or combined) can not be used to reject claim 1, or any claim dependent thereon, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Moreover, as claims 2, 4, 5, 8-10, and 12 depend from claim 1, each of these dependent claims is also allowable over Morisawa and Manaka, without regard to the other patentable limitations recited therein. In light of the foregoing, a withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 8-10, and 12 is both warranted and earnestly solicited.

CONCLUSION

For the aforementioned reasons, claims 1, 2, 4-13, and 15-20 are now in condition for allowance. A Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned if such communication would expedite the prosecution of the application.

Respectfully submitted,

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THE COMMISSIONER IS HEREBY AUTHORIZED TO CHARGE ANY ADDITIONAL FEES WHICH MAY BE REQUIRED REGARDING THIS APPLICATION UNDER 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, OR CREDIT ANY OVERPAYMENT, TO DEPOSIT ACCOUNT NO. 19-0741. SHOULD NO PROPER PAYMENT BE ENCLOSED HEREWITH, AS BY A CHECK BEING IN THE WRONG AMOUNT, UNSIGNED, POST-DATED, OTHERWISE IMPROPER OR INFORMAL OR EVEN ENTIRELY MISSING, THE COMMISSIONER IS AUTHORIZED TO CHARGE THE UNPAID AMOUNT TO DEPOSIT ACCOUNT NO. 19-0741. IF ANY EXTENSIONS OF TIME ARE NEEDED FOR TIMELY ACCEPTANCE OF PAPERS SUBMITTED HEREWITH, APPLICANT HEREBY PETITIONS FOR SUCH EXTENSION UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 AND AUTHORIZES PAYMENT OF ANY SUCH EXTENSIONS FEES TO DEPOSIT ACCOUNT NO. 19-0741.